

SELECTIONS
FROM THE
VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS

PUBLISHED IN THE

**PUNJAB, NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES, OUDH, AND
 CENTRAL PROVINCES,**

Received up to 20th January, 1872.

POLITICAL (DOMESTIC).

THE *Urdú Akhbár* of the 8th January invites the attention of the Municipality of Umballah to the distress suffered by the people of the city on account of the scarcity of water. Not only is water very deficient in the wells, but the little that is drawn from them, with the greatest difficulty, is salt and muddy. For this reason most of the people use the water of ponds and rivulets, which, on account of its being stagnant and the green scum which collects on its surface, is extremely unwholesome, and produces various diseases. The Municipal Committee is asked to take steps for removing the complaint.

The *Akmal-ul-Akhbár* of the 10th January, under the heading "Delhi," notices two important cases of theft. In one of these property worth Rs. 2,500 was stolen from the wardrobe of the Maharajah of Gwalior during his recent stay in that city in order to witness the manoeuvres of the camp of exercise; in the other, a prostitute named Hussun Jan, who lives near the Jami Musjid, close to the place where Bunde, banker, was lately plundered of his valuables, lost property valued at Rs. 18,000. There is no hope of the thieves being found out.

The *Benares Akhbár* of the 11th January again finds fault with the Municipal Committee of Benares for neglecting the cleanliness of the city. Most of the lanes and bye-streets

remain in a disgraceful state on account of not being cleaned for several days. Worse still, the water of the gutters by being suffered to flow over the lanes gives rise to a most offensive smell. The people are not to blame in the matter, as there is no sewer in the city to drain off the water. On the introduction of the octroi, the Municipal Committee had published a notice in which it was promised that a sewer would be made through the city; but unfortunately this promise has been violated. The people of one mohulla recently submitted a memorandum, reminding the Committee of its engagement, but to no purpose. The writer remarks that if promises are broken in this way the people will in future place no confidence in Government, and has strong hopes that the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, on becoming aware of the fact, will do full justice in the matter.

The *Shams-ul-Akhhār* of the 12th January takes exception to the large number of holidays (117 days) prescribed for the Small Cause Courts of Bengal for the current year. It is remarked that if the courts remain shut for so many days in the year, the work will certainly suffer great interruption, and litigants will have to undergo much loss and inconvenience.

The *Mufid-i-Am* of the 15th January remarks on the uselessness of publishing the proceedings of municipal meetings in newspapers without a detail being furnished of the income and expenditure of the municipality. The publication of the accounts of municipal committees would serve a variety of useful purposes. *Firstly*, the people would be kept informed of the way in which the money raised from them for municipal purposes is spent, and would know that this money is wholly devoted to the objects for which it is collected. *Secondly*, a comparison between the systems of management of different municipalities would be feasible, which would enable the people of one district to know what improvements and reforms have been introduced in other districts, and how far they are useful or expensive as compared with those adopted

in their own district, as well as to test the abilities of municipal commissioners.

The *Nar-ul-Absar* of the same date has a long article on the annual fair held at Allahabad in the month of *Mâgh*, and the taxes levied at it. The writer begins by giving the following history of the fair, in order to show that the taxes are extremely unjust and improper.

The Allahabad *Mâgh* fair has been in existence from time immemorial. At the commencement of the British rule in India a tax was levied from the pilgrims, which remained in force till A. D. 1842, when the East India Company abolished it, on the ground that it was improper to levy an impost on religious ceremonies, and laid down a regulation to that effect. On the assumption of the Government of India by Her Majesty, a proclamation was issued and published throughout the length and breadth of India, in which a solemn engagement was made that no interference of any kind would be made with the religious observances of the people of any religion or sect. Both in accordance with this proclamation and the regulation just referred to, therefore, any tax on a religious ceremony, which cannot but be regarded as a hindrance in its way, must be deemed a violation of a deliberate promise. Hence the complaints against the *Mâgh* fair taxes are but just and too well founded. For several years past these taxes have been of various kinds, and are much more objectionable than the public impost formerly levied on pilgrims, which was not felt half so severely as the multifarious taxes now levied. A tax is raised from barbers, another from sellers of flowers and milk, which are dedicated to the river in accordance with the Hindoo religion, and so on. Even vendors of barley-flour, and other things essential for performing the funeral rites of ancestors, which is one of the most important duties among the Hindoos, so much so that even the right to inheritance is based on it, are not exempted from a tax, the monopoly of the sale being given to a contractor in lieu of a certain sum of money.

These various levies cannot but be deemed as taxes collected by Government in an indirect way, and fall very heavy on the people. The vendors recover considerably more than they pay in taxes from the sales, and make the taxes a pretext for charging exorbitant rates. In this way not only has each pilgrim to pay much in excess of the tax which was before levied all at once by order of Government, but has to pay that much as often as he bathes in the Ganges, having each time to purchase the aforesaid things. Thus the loss suffered by the people far exceeds the gain derived by Government from the unlawful proceeding. Apart from this consideration, such a system of raising money gives ample scope for misappropriation and embezzlement; and it is probably for this very reason that some self-interested persons have devised it. The writer is at a loss to make out why, in the face of all these mischievous consequences, Government has tolerated the pernicious practice, and that, too, in the case of its Hindoo subjects, who are pre-eminently loyal and attached to it. It is all very well to say that the taxes are levied by municipal commissioners for municipal purposes, but surely such a policy is highly objectionable as interfering with the religious rites of a nation which forms by far the greater portion of the Indian subjects of the British Government. It makes Government liable to the charge of breach of promise, and ought, therefore, to be abolished. This is all the more necessary as people from distant places who visit the fair carry wrong notions with them and diffuse them everywhere, which serves to create distrust towards Government in the minds of all.

Setting these considerations aside, the taxes in question are injurious in another point of view. The object contemplated by the institution of fairs is to promote trade, and it is for this reason that Government gives every encouragement to them, and the authorities use their endeavours in setting up new fairs in different places. Unhappily, however, quite the contrary is the case with the *Mágh* fair, which, in consequence of the heavy imposts, has been in a state of decline for some years past,

a fact which the writer confirms by his own experience and the testimony of old persons. Worse still, new grievances are being invented by some officers with the object of extorting money from the people by unlawful means, which is so discouraging to the latter that they feel it unpleasant to visit the fair. Among these is mentioned a new kind of tax on conveyances, which is forcibly collected at the road side by a set of men armed with clubs, who look like dacoits or highwaymen. It is impossible to make out by what authority this unlawful tax is levied, as the collectors have no order to show, nor is there any sign-board or notice hung at the place to prove it to be a public impost. Besides, since a wheel-tax is already assessed by the Municipal Committee, it is but reasonable to suppose that a fresh impost on carriages could not have been sanctioned by the authorities. These circumstances, added to the fact that even the constable posted at the spot does not know by what authority the tax is levied, while the club-men have no more to say than that they have taken a contract for the levy, leave no room to doubt that it is unlawfully collected. But, nevertheless, it must be paid, so that if any one through ignorance brings no money with him to pay, he finds it a hard task to extricate himself from the clutches of the oppressors, while a worse fate is likely to befall those who, under the belief that a set of bad characters have assembled on the spot in order to practise unlawful extortions, happen to refuse to pay the tax, and in the struggle consequent on this refusal something serious is sure to happen. The writer thinks it a great pity that under the rule of a just Government like the British an abuse like this, which is just the kind of evil for which Native Governments received a bad name, should have come to exist.

The writer concludes with the remark that his object in pointing out the above evils is not to pick holes, but as a loyal subject to make an honest representation of the grievances which affect a large community of the people, of whom he himself is one, and which he has seen from personal experience to be well founded, in order that the attention of Government

may be drawn to them, and all kinds of complaints which reflect discredit on it may be removed. It was with this object in view that several articles on the mismanagement of the Allahabad Municipality were published in the foregoing numbers of the paper under review, of which Government was pleased to take due notice, though, unfortunately, new evils arose in the system which it was desired to reform. The writer refers to the debt of three lakhs of rupees which has been contracted by the Municipality for conservancy purposes, a plan which he highly disapproves, both because the incurring of heavy debts of this kind is in itself ruinous, and because oppressive measures such as those adopted in connection with the *Mágh* fair, which are the subject of this article, will have to be devised in order to liquidate the debt.

A correspondent of the *Khurshid-i-Jahántáb* of the same date, writing from Kakoree in the Lucknow District, states that though cholera has disappeared from the pergunnah small-pox has taken its place, and is so prevalent that ten or twelve persons, some of whom were twenty years old, fell victims to it in the course of a week.

A serious case of theft is also reported to have happened in the end of December last, at the house of Rasheed-uz-Zaman, a celebrated gentleman of the place. Property valued at about Rs. 6,000 was stolen. In spite of the exertions of the Lucknow police, and the inquiries made by them on the spot, no trace of the thieves was found.

The same paper suggests the need of framing a special act for checking the oppressions practised by persons of the Bunjara caste. The writer thinks it a scandal that, while steps have been taken by Government for putting people of the Kunjur, Sansee, Haboora, and other vagrant tribes under restraint, no attention has been paid to putting a stop to the crimes committed by wandering parties of the Bunjara caste. These men, though they profess to be grain-merchants, are in reality great thieves, and extremely clever in cheating and

cattle-stealing, a fact which the writer proves by referring to two important cases which happened in Agra. In one of these, a native of Naboorah (Futtehabad), named Dowlut Gir Goo-sheen, was cheated by a Bunjara out of a sum of Rs. 12,000 some years ago, and in the other, which happened last year, one Mohur Dhakur, resident of Nae-ki-Mundee, in the city of Agra, was deceived by a man of the same tribe and suffered a loss of about Rs. 10,000. Besides fraudulent acts of this kind, it is a common practice with them to purchase grain from zemindars in villages, load it on their conveyances, and send it away, without paying the price, and then to find opportunity to sneak away or else insist on paying a less price, which if the owners refuse to take, they leave it with them and depart, so that during the time which the latter take to lodge a complaint in court, they get far out of reach, and on account of having no fixed abode, cannot be traced.

The writer thinks it necessary that an act should be passed for keeping these people under proper restraint.

In its column of local news, the same paper notices the new rules issued by the Postal Department, making it compulsory to register all letters containing hoondees, bills, currency-notes, money-orders, postage-stamps, and the like things, on pain if the senders fail to carry out the order of a fine of double the amount of the registration fee. Under instructions from the Postmaster-General, North-Western Provinces, the rule has been proclaimed in the city (Agra) by order of the Magistrate. The editor takes exception to the measure, and regrets that the Postal Department should have cared solely for its own gain, without making arrangements at the same time for putting an effective check to the frauds practised by postal employees in embezzling the contents of letters. If with the order for compulsory registration it were also ruled that letters containing postage-stamps, bills, and other papers, duplicates of which cannot be obtained, should be closed and sealed by the senders in presence of postmasters, or deputy

postmasters, and at the time of making them over to the addressees the contents should be shown to them by delivery peons, the measure would be just, and all unfair play on the part of postal *employés* would cease. Without such a system there will be as much possibility of the contents of letters being abstracted under the new rule of compulsory registration as there was before.

COMMERCIAL.

The *Urdú Akhbár* of the 8th January draws attention to the trouble and inconvenience suffered by Hindoostanee ladies in journeying by rail. No arrangements have been made to enable them to travel with comfort, and the rules of female seclusion are grossly neglected. The few carriages which have been set apart for females are not available at all times, nor can a full carriage or a compartment of it, supposing a man could afford to pay the charge, be secured without twenty-four hours' previous notice. Besides, even if the necessary notice is given, and a whole compartment is hired, proper seclusion cannot be preserved, as the ticket-collectors and Bengalee baboos insist on opening reserved compartments just like other carriages. And if such is the case with ladies who travel in a reserved carriage, it may be imagined what treatment awaits women of the poorer classes who are unable to pay the fare of a full compartment. In order to remove the abuse, the writer recommends that the East Indian and other railway companies should imitate the system adopted by the Oudh and Rohilkhund Railway Company, who have made excellent arrangements to enable Hindoostanee women to travel with perfect ease and safety. Handsome carriages of a peculiar kind have been made in which privacy has been fully secured, and a number of women have been engaged to look after them. The duties of opening and shutting the carriage, helping ladies in taking their seats, and collecting tickets, are exclusively entrusted to them, no man being allowed to approach the carriages. If similar arrangements were made by other railway companies, all complaints, which are now so common, would cease.

Another point to which the attention of the railway authorities should also be directed is the refusal to allow Hindoostanee ladies to be conveyed in a palanquin or doolee to the railway-carriage. This prohibition, while it brings no gain to the railway company, is very unpleasant to natives, who think it a great disgrace to see their women walk on foot to the platform. The writer strongly recommends that the rule should be abolished.

A correspondent of the *Koh-i-Núr* of the 13th January complains that in consequence of the down train from Delhi to Ghazeeabad consisting only of five carriages passengers have to suffer great inconvenience. Each compartment is so densely crowded that passengers can scarcely find room to sit, and cries and complaints are common. The writer had himself an occasion to travel in the train, when the evil complained of was personally witnessed by him. The attention of the Punjab Railway Company is invited to the grievance.

Another correspondent of the same paper notices the following abuses at the Umritsur Railway-station.

(a) Although a waiting-room has been built by the railway company at a considerable cost for the accommodation of passengers, no one is allowed to make use of it. They have all to assemble in an open plain and expose themselves to the weather, to the great inconvenience and disgrace of persons of both sexes, and especially women who are bound to observe the forms of privacy.

(b) After the tickets have been distributed, both men and women are made to enter the station through a doorway at which four or five policemen are posted to examine the tickets: these roughly handle the passengers and search each before allowing them to get in. Even women, whom in every religion it is a sin for strangers to touch, are subjected to the disgrace. The writer fails to see the use of this scrutiny and degradation, seeing that all passengers provide themselves with tickets as a matter of course before taking their seats in

the carriages; any one of them who is found travelling without a ticket being liable to be charged from the station from which the train originally started.

(c) The practice of making men and women sit in the same carriage is another serious grievance. Formerly, if a man took up his seat in a female compartment, or a woman in that set apart for men, a fine of ten rupees was imposed. Now passengers of both sexes are made to travel together promiscuously, which is equally troublesome to both. While men are vexed with the cries of children who often accompany women, the latter feel the company of men to be inconsistent with their self-respect, and certainly not without reason, seeing that men of an immoral character, and sometimes even Europeans of inferior rank, who are generally drunk, take their seats in the third-class carriages.

The writer draws the attention of the railway authorities to the abuses, and remarks that unless steps are taken to remove them natives will in time give up journeying by rail, and the income of the railway companies will materially suffer.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A correspondent of the *Khurshid-i-Jahantab* of the 15th January praises Moonshee Gunput Sahai, Tehseeldar of Captaingunj (Bustee), for erecting two handsome serais, one in Captaingunj and the other in Mouzah Amorha Khas, at a considerable expense, and proposing to build a third in Beswa bazaar. These serais are situated on the road leading from Goruckpore to Lucknow through Fyzabad, which is much frequented, and will consequently prove very useful by affording comfort and convenience to merchants and other travellers, and ensuring the safety and protection of their goods.

Government is asked to assist in the enterprise.

The following Vernacular newspapers have been examined in this report, viz.:—

No.	NAME OF NEWSPAPER.	LANGUAGE.	LOCALITY.	WHEN PUBLISHED.	DATE.	DATE OF RECEIPT.
1	Naiyir-i-Akbar, ...	Urdu,	Bijnour,	Weekly,	1871.	1872.
2	Rohilkhund Samákhár Patr,	Hindee,	Moradabad,	Ditto,	Decr. 21st	January 15th
3	Ditto Akhbár, ...	Urdu,	Ditto,	Ditto,	" 23rd	" 16th
4	Ditto ditto, ...	Ditto,	Ditto,	Ditto,	" 23rd	" 20th
					" 30th	" 16th
5	Supplement to Lawrence Gazette,				1872.	
6	Kárnámah, ...	Ditto,	Meerut,	Ditto,	Jany. 1st week	" 15th
7	Urdu Akhbár, ...	Ditto,	Lucknow,	Ditto,	" 8th	" 15th
8	Márwár Gazette,	Ditto,	Delhi,	Ditto,	" 8th	" 16th
9	Khair Khwáh-i-Panjáb,	Urdu-Hindee,	Jodhpore,	Ditto,	" 8th	" 17th
10	Akbár-i-Am,	Urdu,	Gujranwalla,	Ditto,	" 9th	" 16th
11	Akmal-ul-Akbár,	Ditto,	Lahore,	Ditto,	" 10th	" 15th
12	Agra Akhbár,	Ditto,	Delhi,	Ditto,	" 10th	" 16th
13	Kavi Vachan Sudhá,	Urdu-Hindee,	Agra,	Tri-monthly,	" 10th	" 17th
14	Benares Akhbár,	Hindee,	Benares,	Bi-monthly,	" 10th	" 19th
15	Akbár-i-Alam,	Ditto,	Ditto,	Weekly,	" 11th	" 15th
16	Lawrence Gazette,	Urdu,	Meerut,	Ditto,	" 11th	" 15th
17	Shams-ul-Akbár,	Ditto,	Ditto,	Ditto,	" 12th	" 15th
18	Muir Gazette,	Ditto,	Lucknow,	Bi-monthly,	" 12th	" 15th
19	Allygurh Institute Gazette,	Urdu-English,	Meerut,	Weekly,	" 12th	" 15th
20	Meerut Gazette,	Urdu,	Allygurh,	Ditto,	" 12th	" 15th
21	Urdú Delhi Gazette,	Ditto,	Meerut,	Ditto,	" 13th	" 15th
22	Koh-i-Núr,	Ditto,	Agra,	Ditto,	" 13th	" 15th
23	Majma-ul-Bahrain,	Ditto,	Lahore,	Ditto,	" 13th	" 17th
24	Núr-ul-Absár,	Ditto,	Ludhiana,	Ditto,	" 13th	" 19th
25	Mufid-i-Am,	Ditto,	Allahabad,	Bi-monthly,	" 15th	" 17th
26	Ab-i-Hayát-i-Hind,	Ditto,	Agra,	Ditto,	" 15th	" 18th
27	Khurshid-i-Jahantab, ...	Urdu-Hindee,	Ditto,	Ditto,	" 15th	" 18th
		Urdu,	Ditto,	Ditto,	" 15th	" 18th

ALLAHABAD:

The 2nd February, 1872.

SOHAN LALL,

Offg. Govt. Reporter on the Vernacular Press of Upper India.

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through. The text appears to be organized into several paragraphs or sections, separated by horizontal lines. Some words are faintly visible, such as "The", "and", "of", "the", "in", "on", "at", "from", "to", "by", "with", "without", "under", "above", "below", "between", "among", "against", "towards", "from", "to", "by", "with", "without", "under", "above", "below", "between", "among", "against", "towards".

